



17 November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: 'The gift of giving' (November 2023)

The nights are drawing in, the weather is getting colder and the mornings are misty. Alongside this, the stars are clear to see, the moon shines brightly and we are starting to see festive lights appearing outside houses.

As we approach Christmas, there is much to be thankful for and appreciate. You may have taken part in bonfire nights, fireworks displays, Diwali celebrations and Halloween events in recent days. Or, like some of our students, you may have engaged with people from different backgrounds, cultures and with different world views. Our hugely successful immersive trips to Uganda and Shanghai returned safely, having conferenced with young people from vastly different backgrounds. Pupils discussed issues relating to justice, the rule of law, globalisation, true equality, the role of religion in society and sustainable ecological development. The importance of a free, fully rounded education that lasts as long as possible cannot be underestimated or under-valued. Our young people saw class sizes of 60 in Year 1 dwindle to just 5 by Year 5 as families could not afford to send their children to school as they are needed elsewhere. This is a struggle in so many countries, a struggle that we are fortunate not to have. Our young people quite rightly have a free education of the highest quality that is provided until they are 18, something that should be cherished.

Discussions with students have taken place over the past few weeks about the need to do the right thing, in the right place, at the right time. You will be receiving emails on a Friday from 'study bugs' to celebrate when your child has had 100% attendance that week or they have not received a single consequence mark that week. It is important that this is celebrated.

It is Movember; a time for a spotlight on men's mental health. Advocated by the world's largest men's mental health charity, we educate our students using the acronym A.L.E.C. which stands for ask, listen, encourage action, and check in. It is also anti-bullying week; a time when we spotlight the need to be kind to all and to 'call out' the bullies and get it dealt with.

We delivered some training for the DfE this week for Andrew Warren, our Regional Director and his team on mental health and wellbeing and what that looks like in schools and specifically at Finham Park School. Our young people presented the variety of different things we do to support positive mental health and wellbeing, including how we give our young people 'genuine agency' in their education and development.

'No-one has ever become poor by giving' (Anne Frank). With it being Children in Need today, we are made more acutely aware of those less fortunate than ourselves and are rightly challenged about what part we can play in having a positive impact on others. In the run up to Christmas, I hope that you enjoy a sense of fulfilment and have ways of providing support for others in whatever way you are able to.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Bishop (Headteacher)

